



USAID
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TAJIKISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Waiting for a Better Tomorrow

Small donations of cash and crops help Tajikistan's poorest survive the winter



Nigina of a small village of Leningrad in central Tajikistan, a recipient of USAID food assistance.

Photo: USAID

"I am so grateful to the American people for sending us this support. With it, it will be easier to survive the winter. I will never forget this help,"

—says Nigina, a 55-year old woman of Leningrad village, Tajikistan.

Nigina looks at the framed photos of her husband and son, and smiles with pride. Her husband had long left their Leningrad Village in southern Tajikistan to search for employment in Russia, and several months ago her son followed the suit. Nigina lives with her daughter in law and three grandchildren, aged 6-months to twelve years in a rented room that used to be village's library, sharing the space with the books next door. "My husband sends me \$10 a month from Russia, and it helps feed our family," she says.

This winter, she will also have \$150 from USAID, through a program run by the Save the Children organization. While not much, the money is expected to help the family through the winter. Nigina also received 50 kilograms of wheat seeds to grow food for the next year on her 20-acre lot. "I will save and save this money, so that they last till February. And once the cold is over, it will be easier," she says, wringing hands in appreciation.

Nigina and her daughter-in-law work at the dekhkan farm, a type of cooperative, but the only payment they bring home is the cotton stalks for fuel. The cash goes to pay for the rent of their room. They are some of the thousands of the poor people across Tajikistan that receive food support from USAID. The USAID program, implemented by Save the Children, applies stringent rules to identify the most needy in the 8-million strong country, where an estimated 60% of people live on less than one meal a day. In each assisted area, community members are consulted throughout the process, and the villages are informed about the criteria for selection, so that they can see for themselves whether they can apply. Such approach prevents favoritism and ensures that villagers don't resent the recipients but work together to help them.

As Nigina and the other villagers receive the donations, they also receive advice how to use the cash. The village elderly, a former economist, will later help plan their gardens, so that the seeds bring as high a yield as possible, come next summer.

Nigina hopes that once the winter is over, her son will also have a job, and with his income, she won't have to depend on the donations anymore.